

Message Text

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EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652:XDGS

TAGS: PFOR, HU

SUBJECT: VATICAN ATTITUDE TOWARD CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN

REF: ROME 8365

1. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO YOUR MAY 20 CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI WE SUGGEST THAT YOU SHARE WITH HIM SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HAVE PROMPTED OUR CURRENT REVIEW OF THE CROWN ISSUE BEYOND THE IMPROVED STATE OF US-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUNGARY - THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN HUNGARY IS A FAR CRY FROM BEING DEMOCRATIC, BUT PARTY LEADER JANOS KADAR NOW RUNS THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE REGIME OF ANY IN THE WARSAW PACT. HE HAS BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL

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THAN ANY OTHER WARSAW PACT LEADER IN SATISFYING THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF HIS PEOPLE AND IN TOLERATING PLURALISM. IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD, THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT POINTEDLY TOOK NO ACTION IN RESPONSE TO A SMALL GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS WHO SENT A LETTER OF SOLIDARITY TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK CHARTER 77 GROUP.

THIS PRAGMATIC ATTITUDE IS SHOWN REPEATEDLY, SUCH AS IN
HUNGARY'S RELATIVELY LIBERAL TRAVEL AND EMIGRATION POLICIES

AND ITS GENERAL OPENNESS TO WESTERN INFORMATION, AND HAS
PLACED HUNGARY IN THE FOREFRONT OF CSCE IMPLEMENTATION
IN EASTERN EUROPE. HUNGARY HAS ADOPTED AN INNOVATIVE,
DECENTRALIZED ECONOMIC SYSTEM, THE NEW ECONOMIC MECHANISM,
WHICH HAS ALLOWED THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE TO ENJOY A RAPID
IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING. IT APPEARS TO
US--AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE VATICAN'S VIEWS--THAT THE
MODUS VIVENDI WHICH HUNGARY'S LEADERS HAVE ACHIEVED WITH
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE VATICAN GOES AS FAR AS ANY-
WHERE ELSE IN EASTERN EUROPE.

3. LEGITIMACY -- MANY MEMBERS OF THE HUNGARIAN-AMERICAN
COMMUNITY CHARGE THAT RETURN OF THE CROWN WOULD BESTOW
THE STAMP OF LEGITIMACY ON THE KADAR REGIME. OTHERS,
SUCH AS FERENC NAGY, THE LAST PRIME MINISTER OF NON-
COMMUNIST HUNGARY, MAINTAIN THAT NO COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT
WOULD INTIMATE THAT ITS LEGITIMACY DERIVED FROM THE CROWN,
THAT THE CROWN'S CONSTITUTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE ENDED WHEN
HUNGARY BECAME A REPUBLIC IN 1946, AND THAT RETURN OF THE
CROWN WOULD NOT ALTER POPULAR RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE
REGIME'S LEGITIMACY. PROPONENTS OF RETURN FURTHER
SUGGEST THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE CROWN IN BUDAPEST WOULD
SERVE AS A CONTINUING INSPIRATION TO THE SPIRIT OF THE
HUNGARIAN PEOPLE AND A SYMBOL OF HUNGARY'S TRADITIONAL
LINKS TO WESTERN CHRISTIAN CULTURE. THEY BELIEVE THAT
THIS WOULD SOON BE RECOGNIZED, EVEN BY OPPONENTS OF
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RETURN. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT
WISHES TO PLACE THE CORONATION REGALIA ON PERMANENT
PUBLIC EXHIBITION.

4. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES YOUR EFFORTS IN THIS RESPECT
AND REQUESTS REPORT ON CASAROLI'S RESPONSE OR REACTIONS
TO PRECEDING POINTS. VANCE

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